

**THE AGENCY OF AN INDEPENDENT
PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL
IN THE MANAGEMENT OF
A MEDIA CENTRE INNOVATION**

By

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ABSTRACT

The agency or personal involvement of the principal within a school is perceived as being of vital importance to the success of innovations. Leadership is necessary, not only to manage the escalating changes in academia, but more importantly to inspire, protect and encourage educators.

One of the current trends in education is the move towards self-management which is a decentralization of power control from the state to the school. Self-management implies choice and this enables the principal to validate the opinions and ideas of everyone who is involved in the process of school governance. The success or failure of an innovation usually depends on the support of the stakeholders. Change can be stressful, and unless the principal is part of the process, the implementation may not be successful.

The context of this study is an independent primary school which has recently undergone many changes, most of which appear to have been initiated and managed by the principal. Independent schools have more autonomy than public schools as they are usually self-funded. The principal is accountable not only to the Board of Governors, but also to the parent body which generally has high expectations of the school.

This study investigates the impact of the principal's agency on the development of a multi-media centre at the school. The extent of his involvement within the school and his leadership style was first established and then the implementation of a new innovation, that of the media centre, was explored. Case study methodology based on semi-structured interviews with selected participants from within the school was employed. These participants represented different perspectives on the principal's leadership and management of the media centre. In addition, documents and photographs were analysed for triangulation purposes.

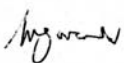
PREFACE

The work described in this dissertation was carried out at the School of Education, Durban, University of Kwazulu-Natal, from January 2006 to December 2007 under the supervision of Ms Maggie Govender (Supervisor).

This study represents original work by the author and has not otherwise been submitted in any form for any degree or diploma to any other tertiary institution. Where reference has been made to the work of others, it is duly acknowledged in the text.=

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December 2007

As the candidate's supervisor, I have approved this dissertation for submission.

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
Dear Mrs. Harris

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0104/07M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

"The agency of an independent primary school principal in the management of a selected innovation"

Yours faithfully


.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA
RESEARCH OFFICE

cc. Faculty Research Office (Derek Buchler)
cc. Supervisor (Ms. M Govender)

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2007-03-27

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The participants in my research for their willingness to be involved in my study

The principal who so graciously welcomed me into his school and for being a
beacon of hope in the turbulent world of South African Education

ABBREVIATIONS

- ISASA** - Independent Schools Association of South Africa
- IQMS** - Integrated Quality Management Systems
- P1** - Participant One: Parent who was also a member of the Board of Governors
- P2** - Participant Two: Educator
- P3** - Participant Three: Head of Department
- P4** - Participant Four: Principal
- SBM** - School-Based Management
- SGB** - School Governing Body
- SMT** - School Management Team

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

This study was inspired by the story of a principal and a pot of paint. After his appointment to a derelict school in a poor area, a principal sold scrap metal scattered on the school property and bought paint with the money he received. After school each day, he began to paint the school all by himself. Seeing the enormity of the task, the staff volunteered their help and it wasn't long before the parents also joined in the project. This effort had a profound effect on the morale of the staff and the children. What struck me was that the personal involvement of a principal in an innovation could determine its success. (Dunford et al, 2000)

One of the current trends in education is the move towards self-management in schools. The stakeholders within a school such as the staff, parents and learners, are regarded as being the best equipped to make the decisions that will give the organization its direction and purpose. As the foremost leader of the school, the principal has a unique role to play in the management of change. The principal's personal involvement in the implementation of innovations is, in my opinion, critical to the attitude and willingness of the staff to participate in the process. The agency of the principal should provide the momentum and passion to see the innovation through to its successful accomplishment.

Independent schools in South Africa enjoy greater autonomy than public schools. Independent schools are largely self-funded and there is consequently a different level of accountability in terms of Departmental regulations. An example of this is with the implementation of the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS). Staff appraisals are undertaken, but are unique to each independent school.

However, parents pay considerable fees and want value for money. The provision of facilities is a key factor in the marketing strategies of independent schools and there is generally a greater level of commitment required from the staff, particularly with regard to the hours of employment. Sport and cultural activities, which usually take place after teaching time, require a number of staff members to coach and supervise the children.

The demands on the School Management Team (SMT) and particularly the school principal are enormous in any school. Schools can be described as complex organizations and the daily challenges are immense. However, the ability to stay in touch with all aspects of the curriculum is necessary, particularly in self-managed schools. Informed decisions pave the way to the future and unless the principal is “engrossed in the ceremony that is called change” (Dalin, 1998, p.96) he¹ may end up making errors in judgment.

1.2 *Rationale*

During the course of my teaching career, I have been involved with many changes, including the National Curriculum Statement and its subsequent revisions, new approaches to various Literacy and Mathematics programmes and organizational policies. In all of these instances, a key factor in their success appears to have been the agency of the principal. In my experience, educators are wary of change, particularly when they have tried and trusted methods that are effective in their teaching strategies. When an innovation is presented to them, they want to observe confidence in the principal. There are times when there is no certainty in the proposed change, but the confidence of the principal creates an assurance that it ‘must be the right thing to do’.

¹ For ease of reading, my reference to school principals will be in the masculine. No exclusion or disrespect is intended towards female principals.

Whilst reading through various articles and books relating to leadership and management, (Botha, 2006; Court, 2003; Gunter, 2001; Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003; Fullan, 2001), I discovered that while much has been written about the management of innovations and the role of the principal, I was unable to establish any direct link between the success of the innovation and the agency of the principal. Communities of practice do exist in schools and the principal may or may not be included in these communities. However, the purpose of my research is to explore the 'power of one' in relation to the management of change, specifically the introduction of a new media centre. My key research questions are to discover what significant innovations can be attributed to the agency of the principal, how he exercised his agency through the media centre project and what limitations there were on his agency as a leader within a community of practice.

1.3 *Theoretical location of the study*

The theoretical framework for my research is based on theories of leadership and power. Leadership is a multi-faceted concept, but it is generally regarded as the "influence process between leaders and followers. Some add that the influence amounts to getting staff to agree to act in ways that they may not otherwise have been inclined to choose" (Dimmock & Walker, 2005, p.11).

There are a number of theories and ideas pertaining to leadership, but the ones I have selected are bureaucracy theory, compliance theory, transformational leadership theory, distributive leadership theory, the Human Relations approach towards people and organization structures and the ideas of Wenger's community of practice. Concepts such as the agency of the principal and the management of change will also be explored.

These theories, ideas and concepts are relevant to my study because they support the view that if there is a 'flat' management structure, collegial

involvement of all stakeholders and the principal is an integral part of the implementation process of innovations, there is a greater chance that the innovations will be successful. Weber's bureaucracy theory which is concerned with the issue of social dominance (Burnes, 2000), and Etzioni's compliance theory which is concerned with coercive, remunerative and normative power and the orientation of the response to that power (Changing minds.org, 2007), help to clarify how the principal uses his power to gain compliance from the stakeholders.

Motivation is a critical factor in achieving the vision of any organization. This is directly influenced by the leadership style of the principal and the value he places on the contributions of his staff, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant. Transformational leadership theory, distributive leadership theory and the Human Relations approach serve to reinforce the need for teamwork and appreciation of human endeavor within the context of the organization.

The agency or personal influence of the principal to bring about change is central to my study. Without his determination and willingness to be a part of the process of change, there may be a difference in its outcome.

1.4 Limitations of the study

My research is a case study of a single independent school and the innovation of a media centre at that school, thus no generalizations can be made from my study. However, a broad principle may be established concerning the agency of the principal in the management of innovations at this particular school and this may be transferred to other similar studies. My research can be classified as basic research which has a general orientation of "adding to the existing body of knowledge in the discipline" (Wiersma, 1991, p.12).

1.5 *Structure of the dissertation*

The first chapter of this research serves as a general introduction to my study. In chapter two, a summary and critical discussion of what I have read on my topic at both national and international levels is presented in my literature review. The third chapter deals with my methodology. The research design of this study, including the research method, instruments, process of data collection, ethical considerations and the limitations will be discussed. The fourth chapter presents the data that has been collected, an analysis thereof, the findings emanating from the data and a discussion of the findings. The fifth and final chapter presents a summary of my findings and discussion of my findings in relation to the research questions that this study set out to investigate, together with my conclusion.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In my previous chapter, a brief introduction was given which provided the background and rationale for this study. It also described the structure of the dissertation. This chapter deals with an overview and critical discussion of local and international literature pertaining to this study.

2.2 Self- governance

A school principal's² role is a daunting one as the success or failure of the school is attributed to his success as a leader. He is regarded as being the vision-holder or keeper of the dream that gives an organization its purpose. His foremost responsibility is to translate the vision into reality by gathering both human and material resources and empowering the stakeholders to render that reality into performance. (Mendez-Morse, 2001)

The Constitution of South Africa (1996), ushered in after the elections of 1994, is the guardian of democracy. Democracy can be regarded as “a system of government by the whole population usually through shared representatives ... an egalitarian and tolerant form of society” (Thompson, 1995, p.359,). The second chapter of the Constitution (1996) contains the Bill of Rights in which the “State (with its organs) undertakes to guarantee and protect the individual's basic human rights, such as the right to life, dignity, privacy and equality” (Bray &

² The terminology used in public and independent schools differs. The most prevalent terminology in literature is that of principal, educator, learner and Governing Body. My research takes place in an independent school and the terminology used in these organizations include headmaster, headmistress, teacher, pupil and Board of Governors. These latter terms, with the exclusion of headmaster, will be used when referring to my interaction with the members of the independent school in which I conducted my research.

Coetzee, 2001,p.13). This has impacted on the way schools are managed as there has been a move away from autocratic, hierarchical structures towards self-governance and participation of all stakeholders in decision-making.

However, it is not the Constitution (1996) alone that has created this situation. The South African Schools Act (1996), which emerged as a result of what was contained in the Constitution (1996), establishes a “uniform system for the organization, governance and funding of schools” (Bray & Coetzee, 2001, p.45). This places the principal in a challenging position as he has to find a way to “reconcile strong leadership with the participatory decision-making that forms the bedrock of any sustained change effort” (Cushman, 1992, p.1). In order to distribute authority, a great deal of trust is involved. A principal has to make wise choices and invest his confidence in people that may or may not deliver the required outcome, an outcome for which he is ultimately responsible.

Self-governance is a “system of education where there has been significant and consistent decentralization to the school level of authority to make decisions related to the allocation of resources... Resources are defined broadly to include knowledge (decentralization of decisions related to curriculum...); technology (decentralization of decisions related to the means of learning and teaching); power (decentralization of authority to make decisions); material (decentralization of decisions related to the use of facilities, supplies and equipment); people (decentralization of decisions related to human resources, including professional development in matters related to learning and teaching, and the support of learning and teaching); time (decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of time and finance (decentralization of decisions related to the allocation of money)” (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, pp. 4-5).

Self-governance must therefore have direct “benefits for students [because resources] can be allocated in optimal fashion to meet the particular mix of priorities and learning needs that exist in a particular school” (Caldwell & Spinks,

1992, p.57). Each school has a unique ethos and this creates the context in which decisions must be made. If School Governing Bodies (SGBs) were in a position to make appropriate choices about their schools' needs such as reading material, sports facilities and staff development, it would seem logical that resources can be prioritized and used to the best possible advantage.

Decentralization of decision-making will probably lead to creative solutions to solving problems. All schools have to budget carefully in order to provide the optimum use of available resources. When there is ownership of a decision by the various stakeholders, there is usually greater motivation to embrace the outcomes of that decision. An example of this is an anecdote supplied by a fellow Master's student: At a rural school where security problems were being experienced, the SGB decided to allow some of the parents to use a piece of school land to plant vegetables on the condition that they took turns to work in their gardens each day of the week so that they could monitor what was happening in the school when nobody else was around. "People become strong and effective only when they are given the opportunity to make decisions, initiate actions, solve problems, and meet challenges...Empowering leadership is sometimes the only real advantage one organization has over another in our competitive society" (Maxwell, 2003, p.183). The extent of the decentralization of power depends largely on the principal's willingness to hand over responsibility.

There are three major forms of decentralization: Firstly, deconcentration which is the transfer of tasks not authority, secondly, delegation where the transfer of decision-making authority from higher to lower hierarchical structures can be withdrawn at any time and thirdly, devolution where the transfer of authority is complete in that people act independently without permission and accept responsibility for their actions (Lemmer, 2000). Decentralization of power should thus be regarded as a process of staff development under the mentorship of the principal. People within an organization should be given opportunity to develop their levels of responsibility together with the skills and knowledge required to

perform their allocated duties. “During that early period, be a grace giver. Try to give them what they need, not what they deserve... applaud any progress. People do what gets praised” (Maxwell, 2003, p.183).

At the heart of decentralization of power, lies the premise that active participation will create the necessary climate, support mechanisms and structures for engendering participation and involvement. Not only will standards of teaching improve, but the school will become more effective because the collective needs of the stakeholders will be met. Shared decision-making promotes communication and a willingness to negotiate. (Lemmer, 2000).

However, despite the apparent advantages of shared decision-making, there are many principals who are hesitant to involve teachers in this process. Research conducted by Swanepoel & Booyse (2006) in South Africa and nine other countries found that principals were happy for educators to be involved with decisions relating to classroom practices, but to a lesser extent for them to be involved with educator support and human relations. The reasons given for their reluctance to engage educators in all decisions were that educators frequently don't have the holistic picture, they lack experience and some aspects of school management and leadership are of a specialized nature. From my experience, another reason which is becoming increasingly apparent in various schools is that many educators simply don't want the responsibility of being part of all decisions because it is not part of their portfolio. They are already overloaded in terms of work and they regard certain decisions as the domain of the SMT. “My principal is only using this thing about school-based management to dump more work on us” (Botha, 2006, p. 346) was a comment made by an educator who was involved in a research study regarding decentralization of decision-making.

In order for a principal to handle this matter sensitively, he needs to be fully aware of the nuances of his staff. There may be a perception that the principal only delegates the ‘unimportant’ or ‘boring’ tasks and decisions to his

subordinates and that these ultimately have no relevance in the leadership and management of the school. Attempts at inclusivity and participation could be seen as a notional activity or contrived collegiality to pacify the stakeholders and not a genuine ad vocation of democracy. This establishes the need for a principal to become a member of the communities of practice within his school and not to alienate himself from being part of the management of innovations.

2.3 *Communities of practice*

The term communities of practice can be conceptualized as being “groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger, 2001, p.1). Three characteristics are crucial to the existence of communities of practice: Firstly, the domain of interest which defines the identity of the community of practice implies a commitment and degree of competence amongst its members. Secondly, the community itself provides the opportunity for the members to build relationships through learning from each other and interacting with each other. This creates a special bond between members and a sense of belonging to the community. Thirdly, the members must be practitioners and not merely people who share a common interest. (Wenger, 2001).

There are a number of advantages to communities of practice. Not many prospective leaders within schools are willing to take full responsibility for decisions. Practitioners in a community of practice can take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need. Links are also established between learning and performance. This is of paramount importance because of the frequent distance between theory and practice (Wenger, 2001). If a principal is unaware of what is happening at the ‘coal face’ of his school, inappropriate decisions can be taken which could ultimately jeopardize the realization of the school’s vision. A community of practice is not limited by formal structures and

enables the members to have freedom to explore choices and opportunities for providing solutions without the threat of bureaucratic inhibition.

By implication, the principal should be involved with the communities of practice in his school as he is ultimately responsible for all that takes place. It is also not sufficient to develop the staff, but the principal himself can learn from the members of the community.

The role of the principal in the community of practice may not be a central one. The use of his agency or personal involvement may be used to motivate, encourage and support the innovation and not to 'direct' proceedings. He is able to "exert power" (Thompson, 2003, p.25) in order to get things done. His presence serves to assure staff of his interest and genuine concern to see the innovation implemented successfully. This also provides a unique opportunity for the principal to mentor and develop leadership within his school. Others will see the validation of the principal's sincerity in the promotion of the devolution of his authority while at the same time using his agency to ensure that things happen.

2.4 Leadership theories

Leadership theories have developed considerably during the 20th Century, but still remain an elusive concept. Leadership can be defined as "one or other form of dominance where the subordinates more or less have to accept the commands and control of another person" (Gerber et al, 1998, as cited in Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003, p.139). Bush & Middlewood (1997, p.23) describe leadership as "having the ability to influence others – individuals, groups and teams – to take them in a desired direction". This raises the issue of authority and power. "Many people have authority (which is conferred), but not the power (which has to be acquired) to assert the authority effectively. Power is therefore the basis of leadership" (Gerber et al, 1998, as cited in Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003, p.140). Few people are ready to accept 'unproven' leadership. There is

often a process of acceptance based on past performance, present ability and future potential.

A number of theories have been formulated within the context of leadership. Max Weber's bureaucracy theory is concerned with the issue of social dominance (Weber, 1947). A small group of people within an organization has power over the rest of the employees. Authority over others is described as, "the right to act, or command others to act, toward the attainment of organizational goals ...[which has] legitimacy based on the authority figure's position in the organization" (Robbins, 1987, as cited in Burnes, 2000, p.176).

Weber (1947) describes three types of authority: Charismatic authority where the leader is able to influence others by his personal magnetism; traditional authority where the leader is obeyed because of the nature of the inherited position that the leader holds; and legal authority where the leader is permitted to dominate because of the nature of the inherited position that the leader holds (Weber, 1947). The position of school principal is one which is generally recognized as one of significant authority over others. The staff, parents, learners and members of the community usually approach the principal with respect because of the authority vested in him by virtue of the position.

This classical approach to leadership is in contrast to communities of practice. The hierarchical structures within a bureaucracy effectively exclude participation and shared decision-making. Communities of practice, on the other hand, advocate collegiality, collective responsibility and participatory decision-making.

Another relevant theory is Amitai Etzioni's compliance theory (Business open learning archive, 2007). He identified types of power used by those in positions of dominance: Coercive power is when physical rewards and punishments ensure conformity, remunerative or reward power uses material resources as the means of control, and normative power ensures compliance by symbolic means

such as praise, privileges and status symbols. Two key elements are the types of power and the types of orientation toward that power. (Business open learning archive, 2007),

Distributed leadership can be described as “a form of concerted action which is about the additional dynamic that occurs when people work together or that is the product of conjoint agency ...it implies interdependency rather than dependency embracing how leaders of various kinds and in various roles share responsibility” (Davies, 2005). Everybody in an organization can be regarded as a leader and the emphasis is not about one person dominating the other, but rather working together “as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together” (Davies, 2005, p.163). The two key aspects of distributed leadership are involvement and mutual interdependence. Through wider decision-making and increased commitment to organizational goals and strategies, distributed leadership can be described as a transformational approach to traditional hierarchical leadership structures (Davies, 2005).

Despite the democratic positioning of distributed leadership, it is, in my opinion, a somewhat idealistic approach. Decisions ultimately have to be made in the interests of school development and, with the best will in the world, not everybody will share the same perspectives and arrive at consensus. The school principal has to be the final decision-maker as he is usually in the unique situation of having the most informed position. However, the theory behind this form of leadership is sound because it implies that the input of the various stakeholders will influence the decision made by the principal. Collectively, ‘the team’ is stronger than the individual and prevents total dependence by a group on an individual.

The relevance of this for my study is that the involvement of the stakeholders has played a significant role in decisions made by the principal. There is evidence that opportunities are given to involve people’s opinions and that management

structures are in place to serve a purpose as apposed to the creation of a hierarchy of control and ordination.

The agency of a principal can be described as “action personified” (Thompson, 1995, p. 25) or the power of the individual. Van Deventer & Kruger (2003, p. 155) make a distinction between authority “this is the right to enforce specific actions within certain guidelines (policy) and to act against those who are unwilling to work towards the stated aims” and power which is “the capacity of a leader to influence the behaviour of others, which must be earned”.

The role of the principal within the context of my study needs to be affirmed by the authority of the position. The title ‘principal’ is loaded with meaning and creates a platform from which directives can be given. However, authority alone does not mean that staff are happy to follow a leader. It is ultimately the power of the principal that will inspire and motivate people. They will grow to respect and admire the principal, not because of the position he holds, but because of his agency. The staff will comply with the demands made of them because the principal has made them feel special and appreciated. “The simple proposition is that – the greater the individual is committed, the less formal control is needed” (Business open learning archive, 2007, p.1).

2.5 Educational leadership, styles and traits

The concept of educational leadership is difficult to define because there appears to be a subjective understanding of the term. However, there are three dimensions which can contribute towards its comprehension, namely, influence, values and vision (Bush, 2003). Influence over others can be achieved by individuals and teams and can extend beyond intrapersonal leadership to more material things, for example, the way people dress. Values include both personal and professional values which reflect the morals and beliefs of the stakeholders (Bush, 2003). The communication of the school's vision is probably the most

important responsibility of the principal. If the staff, pupils, parents and the community are aware of the vision, there is usually greater commitment to ensure its realization, especially if they have been a part of its formulation (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992). Influence, values and vision may also reflect the personality and character of the principal. The stakeholders within the school will look to the leadership of the principal for direction and guidance.

The findings of research were synthesized and a number of traits which consistently characterized effective leaders were found: “These included a sense of responsibility, concern for task completion, energy, persistence, risk-taking, originality, self-confidence, capacity to handle stress, capacity to influence, capacity to co-ordinate the efforts of others in the achievement of purpose” (Stodgill, 1950, as cited in Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, p.49).

Leadership is a complicated process because no one recipe will guarantee success, especially when managing change. Six leadership styles can be identified: “(1) Coercive – the leader demands compliance... (2) Authoritative - the leader mobilizes people toward a vision...(3) Affiliative – the leader creates harmony and builds emotional bonds... (4) Democratic – the leader forges consensus through participation... (5) Pacesetting – the leader sets high standards for performance... (6) Coaching – the leader develops people for the future...” (Goleman, 2000, as cited in Fullan, 2001, p.35). During the implementation phase, all of these leadership styles will come into play. A possible example of this could be the introduction of a new handwriting policy. The teachers will have to comply with the choice of font, they need to support the vision of neat writing for pupils as a tool to express their knowledge, the principal can look at the children’s work and provide positive and constructive feedback, the staff would all be given the opportunity to express their opinion on the new policy, acceptable standards would be put in place and the teachers would strive to reach the desired outcome where the focus is no longer on neatness and letter

formation as this would have been achieved, but on the content of the child's work.

The relevance of this for my research is that it is not possible to categorise a principal's leadership style. "It seems that change, including turbulence, is a permanent condition in education" (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, p.4) and given this dynamic diversity in school leadership and management, it would be virtually impossible to adopt a single style and trait to cope with the daily challenges of the position. The recent teacher/worker strike which took place in June 2007 in South African schools, is an example of where authoritative and coercive leadership was required to make emergency decisions with regard to school evacuation and closure. The urgency of these decisions precluded any chance of democracy based on collegial decision-making.

2.6 Leadership role of the principal

The role of the principal is a complex and demanding one. The aim of the position is "to ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures as prescribed; to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies" (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, p.c-64). Knowledge of government policies, curriculum issues, financial management and human resource management are key responsibilities. Marketing management is an emerging area in many schools as the 'school brand' is becoming increasingly important. There is a great deal of competition between schools and their respective reputations need to be guarded carefully.

A framework for the various leadership roles based on more than 200 reports of research on school effectiveness and change has been developed (Murphy, 1990, as cited in Caldwell & Spinks, 1992). This has been adapted by Caldwell

& Spinks (1992) to identify four broad types of activity which would be required of a “leader of learning and teaching...:

MISSION AND GOALS

- Formulating mission and goals of the school
- Communicating mission and goals of the school

PROCESS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

- Promoting quality teaching
- Supervising and evaluating teaching
- Allocating and protecting teaching time
- Coordinating the curriculum
- Mentoring student learning

CLIMATE FOR LEARNING

- Establishing positive expectations and standards
- Maintaining high visibility
- Providing incentives for teachers and students
- Promoting professional development

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

- Creating a safe and orderly learning environment
- Providing opportunities for meaningful student involvement
- Developing staff collaboration and cohesion
- Securing outside resources in support of school goals
- Forging links between home and school” (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, p.59)

The purpose of listing these activities is to provide insight into the complexity of a principal's position. Traditionally, a principal has come through the ranks of the teaching profession and very few appear to have had formal training. Some may have been promoted because they were excellent teachers, but this does not necessarily mean they will be able to lead a school effectively. Huge errors can be made through a lack of leadership and management literacy. In an attempt to address this problem, the Advanced Certificate in Education is being introduced and is becoming compulsory for those members of staff who wish to become principals in public schools.

School –based management (SBM) has necessitated a change in the role of the school principal. He has been invested with the power to “make on-site decisions such as how money should be spent, where educators should be assigned, and even what should be taught in the classrooms (in countries where there is not some form of centralized curriculum development). Provincial education departments no longer tell schools and school principals what to do, but instead try to help them accomplish what they decide independently to do” (Botha, 2006, p. 341).

Research undertaken in four selected schools in Gauteng examined the school principals’ and educators’ perceptions of the relationship between SBM and school improvement (Botha, 2006). In this qualitative case study, schools were selected based on their matric results as these could easily be quantified. Qualitative data was also gathered through interviews and from this it became clear that “the principal’s role in SBM has evolved from that of instructional leader to a broader one of orchestrating decision-making using teams of people” (Botha, 2006, p.346). The most significant factor affecting the relationship between SBM and school improvement was the leadership style of the school principal. Democratic leadership was valued, but regarded as time-consuming. Consultation with teachers made them feel that they can take ownership of plans for improvement because they were part of the process of implementation.

A further interesting case study regarding the role of principals was undertaken in a New Zealand school (Court, 2003). Three teachers decided to work together as co-principals. In terms of the New Zealand Education Department, an individual had to be named as principal in order to take responsibility for the management decisions so it was finally agreed that one would be named, but this was kept confidential (Court, 2003).

The three teachers believed that transformational leaders served to perpetuate bureaucracy in schools as they remained “positioned at the head of a chain of

influence and control, holding final veto power over all school wide decisions ... Arguably, this endorses an elitist view of the principalship.” (Court, 2003, p.22). While the three co-principals regarded vision as important, they felt the focus should be on learning and teaching and not on the personality of the leader (Court, 2003).

This school was a small school and the original co-principals are no longer there. Within five years, 1997-2002, there had been several staffing changes. No reasons were given for the resignations of the staff so it is difficult to establish if it was because of this unusual management structure or for personal reasons. However, the basic principle of collegiality and team work supports my study. “Shared leadership is not necessarily ‘easier’, but the combined effort makes it easier to focus on educational and professional goals and not personal agendas. It is also more fundamentally sound because of the inherent processes of quality assurance and continuous improvement” (Court, 2003, p.31).

2.7 Transformation through motivation

Transformational leadership theory is based on the assumptions that “ people will follow a person who inspires them, a person with vision and passion can achieve great things, [and] the way to get things done is by injecting enthusiasm and energy” (Changing minds.org, 2006, p.1). Transformational leaders have a deep sense of commitment, are very involved with the people whom they lead, are able to motivate people and they celebrate every success no matter how small.

This theory is relevant for my research because my belief is that without a highly motivated leader who is part of the community of practice, change innovations may not always be successful. The leader’s agency is a ‘force’ that propels the change innovation towards the desired goal.

The Human Relations approach towards people and organization structures has a model consisting of three core elements: “Leadership and communication, intrinsic job motivation (as well as extrinsic rewards) [and] organization structures and practices which facilitate flexibility and involvement... It is an approach which stresses that human beings are not mere cogs in a machine but that they have emotional needs: humans want to ‘belong’, achieve recognition, and develop and fulfill their potential” (Burnes, 2000, pp.71-72) .

Traditionally, teachers do not enter the education profession to make large sums of money. Their motivation usually comes from the emotional satisfaction of helping children to achieve their potential. However, the increasing challenges such as discipline, the curriculum changes and demands of the parents, together with inflation, have turned the focus more on salary issues. The recent teacher/worker strike which took place in June, 2007, is evidence of this. However, improved conditions of service alone will not improve the quality of life of teachers. Teamwork, appreciation, a sense of belonging and feeling valued and appreciated are fundamental to job satisfaction. People want to feel special whether in a factory of 1920 or a classroom in 2007. “When probabilities and uncertainties surround people and put them under inevitable frustrations and anxieties, they eagerly look for some anchoring points, some certainties and some faith. The assurance and reassurance serve as guide to them, or serve as a balm to heal their wound” (Cantrill, 1967, as cited in Mukhopadhyay, 1994, p.169). School management and particularly the school principal have an enormous responsibility to ensure their staff are happy and motivated because this has a significant impact on the children whom they teach.

2.8 *Coping with change*

Change innovations are amendments which alter the status quo. “Change can be regarded as a dynamic and continuous process of development and growth that involves a reorganization in response to ‘felt needs’. It is a process of

transformation, a flow from one state to another, either initiated by internal factors or external forces, involving individuals, groups or institutions, leading to a realignment of existing values, practices and outcomes” (Morrison, 1998, p.12). There may be internal voluntary changes or external involuntary changes. External change may be regarded as authoritarian and internal change may come about as a result of collegiality or the agency of the leader.

Fullan (2001, p.34) refers to the “implementation dip” a critical part of the process when emotions run high among the staff. People feel confident in what they do well and learning new skills can cause them to feel insecure, fearful and overwhelmed by the enormity of the effort required to implement the innovation. The reasons for the anxiety may be caused by the responsibility of maximizing the benefit of new resources like a Smart Board, the accountability for the performance of their learners, understanding the complexity of new documents such as the National Curriculum Statement and translating theory into practice. If the principal is part of this process, he will be aware of the challenges and also be appreciative of the enormity of the task at hand. Just like a parent would hover around a young child learning to walk, so the principal should be involved as an affiliative leader , encouraging, motivating, keeping the process moving forward and ensuring that the group dynamic remains positive (Fullan, 2001).

The principal’s involvement transcends an emotional link with his staff. It provides insight into the necessary skills, resources and practical help that educators need. Professional development and instructional improvement (Fullan, 2001), is the responsibility of the SMT and this can be organized for the staff. Educators may also be in a subjective position and their frustrations may obscure their understanding of the innovation. The principal is in a position to remain objective because he is probably not directly involved in the implementation. He usually has a more holistic view of the importance of the innovation within the context of the school as a whole, Departmental regulations and the global positioning of education.

2.9 Conclusion

The change to self-governed schools has required a paradigm shift with regard to traditional hierarchies of leadership. The notion of democracy and the rights of the individual are fundamental in South African society and this needs to be reflected in the way schools are governed and managed.

This chapter has examined literature relating to shared decision-making and the importance of the principal to be involved in the communities of practice. A number of leadership styles have been discussed. Schools are dynamic and complex organizations and no one style of leadership can be relied upon for all situations. The legal authority of the principal cannot be relied upon to promote the commitment and motivation that is necessary to establish a culture of effective learning and teaching. People need to be made to feel special and appreciated. The agency of the principal is vital to the promotion of confidence amongst the stakeholders within a school especially in the context of the escalating changes in education.

In the following chapter, the research design of my study will be discussed. This will include the research method, research instruments, the data collection process, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, a Literature Review was presented. With the global trend towards self-management in schools, the importance of a more democratic form of school governance was discussed. The role of the principal is a challenging one and should reflect a leadership style that advocates shared decision-making, communities of practice and collegiality.

In this chapter, the research design of this study, including the research method, population and sampling, process of data collection and analysis, instruments, ethical considerations and the limitations will be discussed.

3.2 *Research questions*

The focus of my study is to establish whether there is a link between the agency or personal involvement of an independent primary school principal and the management of a media centre innovation. Critical questions were formulated in order to establish the impact of his agency in the success or failure of the media centre.

My critical research questions are as follows:

1. What significant innovations, if any, can be attributed to the agency of the principal of a selected independent primary school within the community of practice?
- 2.1 Did the principal exercise his agency through the management of the media centre innovation? If so, what form did this take?

- 2.2 How was his agency in the management of the media centre innovation exercised?
3. What are the limitations of the principal's agency as a leader within a community of practice?

3.3 *Research methods*

My study aligns itself with qualitative research methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviews and document and artefact collection which were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). My research is designed to understand people and the social and cultural context within which they function.

The underlying epistemology of my research is interpretive which assumes that the access to reality is gained through social constructs such as language, shared meanings and consciousness (Henning, 2004). It focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges (Meyers, 1997). Observation plays a crucial role in the meaning assigned to phenomena because it is only by analysing subtle nuances such as tone of voice, body language and emotional sensitivity that a thick description can be achieved (Henning, 2004).

Qualitative research associates itself with the interpretivist framework which believes that there are different viewpoints that need interpretation and that "No one scientist can objectively capture the world" (Henning, 2004, p.20). "Interpretive research attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings people assign to them" (Trauth, 2001, as cited in Henning, 2004, p.21).

The relevance of the above for my research is that it confirms the positioning of my study. The stakeholders' perspectives on the principal's role in the

management of change is “context-specific...[the] physical and social environment has a great bearing on human behaviour...[and] facts and values [are] inextricably mixed” (Wiersma, 1991, p.14). The researcher’s role in the study is an inclusive one (Wiersma, 1991) and the importance of this was established during fieldwork. The school in which I conducted my research has a strong Christian affiliation and values such as servanthood, being an example, integrity and compassion for one’s fellow man, have a direct bearing on the ethos of the school. This needed to be personally experienced to understand the meaning of the interviewees’ perspectives. “Observation is fallible... but scientific methods can only give us an approximation of the truth” (Henning, 2004, pp.19-20). In the interpretive paradigm, the opportunity of engaging with the participants allows the researcher to gain a depth of social insight that may not be seen if quantitative methods are used to collect data.

There are both “merits and limitations” (Wiersma, 1991, p.14) to qualitative research. The merits are significant for this study as the personal interaction with the participants and the site visits allowed for a personal view of the school and its staff. “The fieldworker uses face-to-face relationships with informants as the fundamental way of demonstrating to them that he or she is there to learn about their lives without passing judgment on them” (Gold, 1997, as cited in Walford, 2001, p.9). “The idea is that participants ‘perform’ less, and, as trust builds, reveal more details of their lives” (Walford, 2001, p.9).

“Qualitative research is based on the notion of context sensitivity, the belief that the particular physical and social environment has a great bearing on human behaviour...They perceive facts and values as inextricably mixed” (Smith, 1987, as cited in Wiersma, 1991, p.14). This comment was particularly relevant for my study as the best way for me to assess the overall involvement of the principal was to ‘get involved’ with the research process in order for me to experience the extent of the principal’s leadership and influence in the school.

There are a number of different methodologies which can inform qualitative research, but the one that I have chosen is an interpretive case study. A case study is an empirical inquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context” (Myers, 1997, p.7). The boundaries are defined because I will be researching the role of an individual and only data applicable to the case will be utilized (Henning, 2004). The individual is the school principal, his leadership and management skills and the selected media centre innovation is specific and unique to the school.

3. 4 Population and sampling selection criteria

The context of my study is an independent primary school in the greater Durban area. Independent schools are usually self-funded, non-profit organizations which attract learners from advantaged backgrounds. They are registered with the Independent Schools association of South Africa (ISASA), but do not have to comply with government policies that direct the governance of public schools. The school in which I conducted research has recently undergone great change and the principal appears to have been responsible for numerous innovations.

There were four participants in my interviews, twelve photographs were used and eight supporting documents were analysed. The participants represented a purposive sample of the stakeholders within the school. The principal, one head of department, one educator and a parent who was also a member of the school Board of Governors, were interviewed. The principal was known to me and when I approached him for permission to conduct research in his school, he readily agreed to participate in my study.

It was unfortunate that I was not in a position to choose the participants in a more random way. “In educational research, random sampling is often not a feasible option, and representativeness has to be argued on a logical basis” (Wiersma, 1991, p.242). The principal suggested the three people based on their knowledge of the innovation and his acquaintance with them. He advised them

of my intentions to interview them for the purpose of my research and this effectively excluded anonymity from the process. The term “informant” can be defined as “an individual in whom one invests a disproportionate amount of time because that individual appears to be particularly well informed, articulate, approachable, or available” (Wolcott, 1988, cited in Wiersma, 1991, p.230). The principal selected these people for this reason. The small sample I was working with could not really have been randomly selected by me because I may have chosen someone who was new on the staff and would not have been able to give me sufficient information.

The fact that the principal selected the interviewees could be viewed as a limitation and in order to counteract the possible caution of the participants, triangulation was used to address this issue. However, photographs were taken by the principal on a brief transect walk and he also selected a sample of documents referring to the media centre innovation. While the principal effectively controlled the sources of data collection, he was not present at the interviews and the participants were encouraged to give their own opinions on the management of the media centre.

3.5 *Research instruments*

The data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, document analysis and an interview using the photo elicitation technique. Data collection employing three different instruments was deliberately chosen for the purpose of triangulation. “Triangulation is qualitative cross-validation. It assesses the sufficiency of the data according to the convergence of multiple data sources or multiple data-collection procedures (Wiersma, 1991, p.233). “Because measurement is fallible, the interpretive researcher encourages varieties of data and different sources and analysis methods in order to strive for validity” (Henning, 2004, p.20). Information gleaned from verbal, written and auditory sources would serve to confirm or refute the importance of the principal's

involvement in the success of an innovation and to cross-check and increase the validity of the study.

3.5.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

The primary source of data was the semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility because “the essence of research, after all, is concerned with the uncovering of what is not known, and that cannot be predicted in advance” (Walford, 2001, p.6).

During the course of the various interviews that were conducted, a number of issues arose that were not anticipated and freedom to explore these through ‘unplanned’ questions elicited rich data. This freedom also lent a conversational tone to the interview which allowed both the interviewer and the interviewee to engage in a more relaxed way. It was necessary to have an interview schedule as this provided a clear focus and purpose for the interview, but being able to investigate unexpected issues such as the school motto, motivation and community involvement, added to the quality of the data collected.

However, semi-structured interviews pose several problems that one needs to take cogniscence of. It is easy to get side-tracked by irrelevant issues which take up time. Few participants are willing and able to be part of lengthy, ongoing research and as a researcher one is constantly aware of the favour that is being bestowed and of the danger of overstaying one’s welcome. One also needs to be on guard against asking leading questions and making judgements.

Another consideration is that in a semi-structured interview, not all participants are asked the same questions. The time constraint is also a problem, because the instrument is designed to take a certain number of minutes, extra questions may mean that other important ones need to be left out.

While there are advantages to structured interviews such as the participants all being asked the same questions, the questions are prepared in advance so the interviewer knows exactly what to ask and they are usually economical in terms

of time constraints, they were not deemed appropriate for this study as each interviewee was requested to give their own perspectives on the management of the media centre innovation.

3.5.2 *Document analysis*

Documents provided a written record of the innovation and were also used to confirm the authenticity of the principal's claims. Documents included extracts of minutes from five various meetings, an extract from an advertising brochure, a newspaper article and plans of the media centre. All documents were photostatted copies of the originals.

The benefits of document analysis include that inaccessible situations can be reached. It is a record of how a phenomenon develops over time, descriptions capture the 'moment' in which the situation occurs and documents are accessible in terms of time and availability. The disadvantages of document analysis is that they may be biased as they were not written for research purposes. There may be subjectivity from the author as well as being an incomplete record of the situation. The document or part thereof may not be available to the researcher because of various reasons such as confidentiality and taken out of context, the document may not be fully understood (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000).

These benefits and disadvantages were relevant for my study. I was able to gain access to information, some of which was confidential, with relative ease. The documents were not comprehensive, but did confirm aspects of my study such as the leadership and agency of the principal.

3.5.3 *Photograph elicitation*

Photograph elicitation provided a visual record of what the principal regarded as the 'jewels of his crown'. It was hoped that the photos would illuminate the value that the principal places on effective teaching and learning and to establish the extent of his involvement in innovations on the school campus. The limitation of photographs in this study was that they needed some explanation added to them.

There is a certain degree of subjectivity if the photographs are taken at face value. All images may have many justifiable interpretations (Simons & Usher, 2000). The transect walk and the comments made by the principal added meaning to the photographs.

3.5.4 *Design of the research instrument*³

The design of my semi-structured interview questions was directly linked to my critical questions. The first three questions focused on establishing how the role of the principal was perceived by the participants.

The next question was asked in order to discover the extent of the principal's personal involvement in different aspects of the curriculum. This was of critical importance to my research as the purpose was to discover a link between agency and the success of an innovation.

The following four questions dealt with the innovations in the school and issues such as the principal's involvement, his role and problems associated with the innovation in the selected innovation were dealt with.

The ninth question dealt with the success or failure of the innovation and finally, the tenth question looked at the limitations of the principal within the context of the innovation and how this was dealt with.

The core questions for the semi-structured interviews were varied slightly to cater for the different perspectives of the participants. The parent who was also a member of the Board of Governors (P1) was asked the various questions from the point of view of an observer in the school. The teacher (P1) and head of department (P2) were asked the questions as presented in the instrument as the questions were essentially designed for stakeholders who are intrinsically

³ See Appendix 1

involved with the school. The questions asked of the principal differed in that they were personally directed to him.

3.6 *The data collection process*

3.6.1 *Pilot interview*

A pilot interview was conducted with a head of department in another school. The reason for this was to assess the quality and quantity of questions to be asked in my semi-structured interviews.

My questions were found to be relevant to my study. I was conscious of the time and found it challenging to simultaneously focus on the answers given to me, to write notes and ensure that I kept to the prescribed length of the interview.

3.6.2 *Administration of the interviews*

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the sample group. Each person had a single interview, with the exception of the principal with whom two interviews were held. A personal interview provided a verbal record that revealed the interviewee's perception of the selected change innovation. Every effort was made to adopt an open, relaxed and friendly forum in order to engage more easily in conversation. The Latin word for conversation, *conversari*, means "keep company with" (Thompson, 1995, p.292). This Latin word is also referred to as "wandering together with" (Kvale, 1996, as cited in Henning, 2004, p.71). Henning (2004) elaborates on this and describes an interview as a "companionable journey". "The dialogic form of interviewing... yields a more honest version of the interviewee's reality, because she feels she is co-owner of the process (Henning, 2004, p.67). Questions were thus open-ended to allow the participant to speak freely about the innovation. Interviews were recorded on

cassette tape and later transcribed and analysed for content and discourse (Henning, 2004).

3.6.3 *Collection of the documents*

The principal, with the assistance of his secretary, was able to locate relevant documents for my study. Documents included extracts of minutes from five various meetings, an extract from an advertising brochure, a newspaper article and plans of the media centre. All documents were photostatted copies of the originals. They were hand-delivered to me by the teacher (P2) who participated in my study.

Through document analysis, I was able to understand the scope of the media centre innovation in more detail and confirm what the participant had told me in their interviews. The documents did not contain sufficient data to substantiate my research, but constituted a significant part of the triangulation of my study. I was particularly fortunate to receive extracts of the minutes of meetings, as these are generally regarded as highly confidential.

3.6.4 *Administration of the photograph elicitation*

During a preliminary discussion with the principal regarding the details of my study, I asked him to take digital photographs of what he regards as significant innovations for which he has been responsible. These pictures were taken during a brief transect walk which also served as the basis of our first semi-structured interview.

My digital camera was used to take the photographs and these were later printed at a photograph shop in a nearby shopping centre. Copies were given to the principal.

3.7 *Data analysis*

The analysis of data was undertaken by means of “open coding ... [where] units of meaning are identified” (Henning, 2004). The interviews were first transcribed

by hand and then typed. They were then returned to each respective participant for confirmation. The participants were asked to delete any information that they felt was confidential or which had not been correctly stated. Important points were then coded on each transcript and then grouped under thematic headings.

The documents were analysed by first placing them in date order with the exception of the advertising brochure and plans which were undated. The comments relating to the media centre, the references to the leadership of the principal and unstated information such as the fact that the principal had attended all the meetings were noted. This information was then sorted into correlating themes which related to the interviews.

Each photograph was analysed in conjunction with the comments made by the principal on the brief transect walk. A detailed description of each photograph was made and themes relating to interviews and documents were noted. The principal was given a copy of the photographs and asked to exclude any or any part of each photograph that he felt would be inappropriate for me to use.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The ethical challenges of my research were those of confidentiality and anonymity. In order to overcome this, each participant had to sign a letter of consent indicating his/her willingness to participate in my research. In this letter they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

The actual names of the participants and school are not used in my dissertation. As mentioned previously, each participant was also given a typed copy of their transcribed interview for comment and completed a form of consent allowing me to use their interview.

The principal was assured that the photographs would not be published in the final research document. The faces of children, people and the name of the school would be removed from the pictures. It is difficult to remove distinguishing

features of buildings and the estate of the school, so the focus of my research is on the composition of the photograph, as apposed to identifying features. The principal was given a copy of the photographs and asked to sign a letter of consent allowing me to use them as part of my research. Similarly, the principal also gave me written consent to use the documents he gave to me.

Ethical clearance for the study was applied for from and granted by the University of KwaZulu Natal.

3.9 *Limitations of the Study*

My research study can be classified as basic research as this is research undertaken to add to an existing body of knowledge in the discipline (Wiersma, 1991). It is a case study of a single school and a single innovation, thus no generalisations can be made from my findings. However lessons may be learned from this study may be of use to further research. The basic concept of the agency of the principal may be transferred to other studies and situations.

The time frame of an innovation is important. It is acknowledged that change is a process and in some cases, success may only be determined long after its implementation. My research therefore focussed on the success of the innovation at a specific point on the time continuum which was one year after the completion of the media centre.

One of the limitations of qualitative research is that bias is inevitable. The interpretation of feelings, social interaction and data ultimately rests with the researcher. However, being aware of this subjectivity demands that a conscious effort must be made "to keep an open mind about 'what is going on here' and what might be the best ways to talk or write about whatever is being studied. But recognising the presence of subjectivity is not the same as saying 'anything goes'. Somehow a balance must be struck between suspending preconceptions and using one's present understandings and beliefs to enquire intelligently"

(Walford, 2001, p.9). “There is a difference between an open mind and an empty head” (Dey, 1993, as cited in Walford, 2001, p.9). “To analyse data, we need to use accumulated knowledge, not dispense with it... The danger lies not in having assumptions but in not being aware of them” (Walford, 2001, p.9).

Reliability and validity are important considerations when doing research. “Reliability is concerned with replicability of both procedures and findings. Validity refers to the interpretation and generalizability of results” (Wiersma, 1991, p.239). Reliability and validity can be further differentiated into internal categories and external categories. In terms of my study, there may not be internal reliability because it is an interpretive study and the data may be not be viewed in the same way by different people. When describing the reactions of people, perceptions of site visits and the relationships between the participants and the researcher, subjectivity is inevitable. However, “the use of multiple data-collection procedures, along with triangulation, tends to enhance internal reliability” (Wiersma, 1991, p.240). By interviewing four different stakeholders and using semi-structured interviews, photographs, documents, internal reliability was addressed as thoroughly as possible within the context of the study.

External reliability is difficult to achieve because of the topic of my research. It would be impossible to replicate the study exactly in a different place because of the school context, the people involved, the time frame and the selected innovation. However, it would be possible to explore the involvement of another school principal and the extent of his or her involvement in a different innovation as this would provide a close correlation to my study. A comparison could be drawn between the two, or more, studies that could add to the overall reliability of my study. In order to assist this process, a detailed description of the methodology is supplied.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the positioning of my research, choice of methodology, research instruments, the data collection process, data analysis,

ethical considerations and limitations of the study. In order for me to investigate the agency of the principal in the management of the selected innovation, it was appropriate to choose an interpretive case study using qualitative methodology.

In the next chapter, I will be discussing the analysis of the data that was collected during my field work and will be presenting my findings and conclusion.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, the research methodology, population and sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis, instruments, ethical considerations and the limitations of this study were discussed.

In this chapter, the data analysis and findings will be presented. The semi-structured interviews, documents and photographs will be analysed and the findings presented and discussed.

4.2 *Data analysis*

In the following analysis, the parent /educators' response is separated from the principal's response as his response represents a different perspective to the other participants. The responses of all four participants are analysed under each question of the semi-structured interviews analysis.

4.2.1 *Semi-structured interviews analysis*

Question 1: What role have you seen your principal playing in terms of school leadership?

Parent /Educators' response

The first participant who was a parent and member of the Board of Governors (P1), regarded the principal as a positive and stern leader. His nature and involvement with the children has earned him their respect. He knows each child by name.

The second participant who was an educator (P2), described the principal as a strong and gracious leader with lots of room for grace. She too commented on the fact that he knows each child by name. He leads by example and is also a builder, pioneer and encourager.

The third participant who was a head of department (P3), thought that as a Christian, the principal's integrity was unquestionable, he is an amazing leader who walks the talk, he is not demanding, he mentors you, is a good listener, encourages you and is wise. He empowers staff and develops them. He looks for and identifies leaders and gives them self-confidence to further their careers. He wants people to have "moments" and is always looking out for his staff and insists on free time when they can "kick leaves". P3 also referred to the principal knowing each child's name.

P1, P2 and P3 regarded the principal as a person with everyone's best interest at heart. His positive approach to leadership and his realistic expectations of the staff had earned him their respect.

Principal's response

The principal (P4), felt his leadership role within the school was "to see capacity grow and gifting fulfilled". He wants to see the staff happy, motivated and growing. He regards leadership as influence and, in growing himself as a leader, this would provide the opportunity to influence others. He subscribes to servant leadership and believes that if you are a leader in this world, "it's about how you can serve your fellow man and community and others outside one's own box". P4 appeared to be aware of the enormous responsibility he had as principal to ensure that staff are happy and motivated.

Question 2: What role have you seen your principal playing in terms of school management?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 described him as organized and that he doesn't use break times for meetings. The teachers have all they need and children are also encouraged to do micro-fundraising to supply their classroom needs, e.g. puzzles and games. The principal knows what he wants and the Board is behind him. He is not unreasonable in his requests, but asks for what he needs to run the school effectively.

P2 commented on the principal's knowledge of both problems and success in the school.

P3 said the principal is involved with assemblies, discipline, teaches various classes and coaches sport. He also plays a significant role in ISASA and also in his church. He conducts staff meetings and professional developments.

All three participants equated management with involvement within the school and with an awareness of what was taking place in all facets of the daily routine. The principal was perceived as someone who is diligent and committed as an educator, coach, leader and manager.

Principal's response

P4 described his role in management as vast and that he tries to keep in touch with everything in and out the school. He attends ISASA meetings, gets minutes of department meetings and has teams in place to manage events. "I'm really trying to keep tabs on all departments of the school and making sure that every need is being met, even if it means a financial need, and is a dream for a department – I want to make it happen".

The principal also equated management with involvement within the school and with an awareness of what was taking place in all aspects of the curriculum.

Question 3: What role have you seen your principal playing in terms of human resource management?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 commented on the strong bond between the staff and the principal – “They adore him”. He will stand by the staff and will support them one hundred per cent. He is very accommodating in that he allows them to pursue their particular interests, such as going on church missions, during school time. They don’t have to sacrifice their dreams for the sake of the school.

P2 felt that he was “pretty good with that”. He has an open door policy and you could make an appointment to discuss anything. He has also counseled staff in a private capacity. He believes that families come first because if that is not in order, then “nothing else will work”.

P3 also remarked on his open door policy and that he was very approachable. He will go to the ends of the earth to help people, even finding accommodation for new staff who had arrived from a different country. You may ask him for guidance with personal problems. However, the principal was not regarded as being “matey-matey” with everyone. There is a great deal of respect for him. If you have a problem with a deadline, by all means discuss it with him, and he will make a plan to help you. The deadline will be met, that is not in question, but assistance will be given if it is required.

As human resource manager, the principal is regarded as being fair and approachable. He is willing to discuss problems and will provide practical solutions where applicable.

Principal's response

The principal firmly believes in an open door policy and feels it is important to talk through issues. "By building relationships with people, you eradicate negative thinking amongst staff". He acknowledges that staff have good ideas and that you have got to "nurture, listen and be able to take ideas and put them in motion". He felt that while there were times when he was not inflexible and was prepared to change his opinion on certain issues, some things are a given. He wants teamwork, not a hierarchy.

Question 4: What role have you seen your principal playing in terms of financial management?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 thought this aspect was well-managed. There are innovative fundraising ideas and budgets are suited to the needs of the school. There is economical use of resources, e.g. the staffroom is used as a venue for certain classes.

P2 stated that the bursar plays a role and that the principal co-signs every cheque. The Board of Governors "kept a strict control of everything".

P3 felt that you can have what you want within the budget, provided you motivate why the purchase is necessary. The bursar makes sure that the money is available and the principal will co-sign the cheque. The church plays a role in funding various projects within the school, e.g. tarring of the road and giving the church hall to the school which became a media centre⁴. Later in the interview, P3 mentioned that their insurance company paid for carpeting to be lifted after it had been damaged in some heavy rainfall and from this it is assumed that the principal has taken care of insuring the school against possible misfortune.

⁴ The name of the centre has been changed for purposes of anonymity.

P1, P2 and P3 did not know of all the ins and outs of the role of the principal in the financial management of the school, but all appeared to be confident that the finances were well looked after and that reasonable requests were usually granted within the limits of the budget.

Principal's response

The principal confirmed there a bursar and two assistants are employed by the school. If there is something worthwhile having and would add value to the school, then a plan would be made to try and get it. The bursar would always come to him for confirmation and anything over the normal budgets, would be approved by the Board of Governors.

Question 5: Are there any other roles you have seen your principal engaged in?

Parent /Educators' response

He was seen to be a person really knew the school (P1), involved parents (P1), is a well-respected member of the community (P2), a family man (P2), father (P2), teacher (P3), visionary (P3), curriculum developer (P3), elder in the church (P1), someone who networks with other heads of school (P3) and a man who assumed a pastoral role in his church (P2).

Question 6: What do you regard as the principal's foremost responsibility in the school?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 said it was to make sure the school motto is carried through, P2 felt it was the well-being of the children as they were close to his heart and P3 thought it was to make sure the school is running happily and that the staff were happy.

Principal's response

The principal's response included all of these aspects. He regarded his foremost responsibility as training the staff to be a positive influence and to build character in the classroom. The end product must be to see children grow and to ensure staff are passionate and love teaching. The critical factor is the fostering of Christian values as these have eternal consequences.

Question 7: Does your principal provide leadership within your school.

Parent /Educators' response

All the respondents confirmed that the principal does provide leadership in the school. They all responded with a "yes", but did not elaborate as the extent of the principal's leadership had been established in the preceding questions.

Question 8: How would you describe the principal's leadership style?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 regards the principal as an "open" leader who listens and gives responsibility and the authority to carry out that responsibility. He is also perceptive in that he is able to identify key issues that are sometimes ensconced in emotion.

P2 believes the principal to be democratic as he draws from those around him in both the school and the church. He shares responsibility with the Heads of Department. There are times when he will oversee a delegation, but this is dependent on the situation and the individual. This was regarded as part of his role and responsibility as principal. He doesn't stifle you, but allows growth.

P3 described the principal as very democratic and one who leads by example. He is happy when people are promoted under his headship. He is a very "involved" leader.

Principal's response

The principal felt his leadership style was one of “ownership” where everyone has a say. Challenges are tested against how it will benefit the children. He is democratic “up to a point”, but there are times when final decisions do have to be made.

Question 9: Please comment on your principal’s involvement in the academic, sporting, cultural and spiritual curricula.

Parent /Educators’ response

P1 was impressed by the involvement of the principal in all the children’s lives. He teaches all children life-skills and watches them play sport. Many principals only have time to watch the first teams, but this principal watches all the teams. The cultural component of this relatively new school is still developing and is regarded as “the beginning of great things”. The principal conducts assemblies and prayers with the staff. As a Christian school, there is no compromise or allowances made for other religions. All children and staff must attend assemblies and prayers.

P2 said the principal teaches Life Skills. He uses his talent as a ventriloquist in the Preschool. He observes lessons in each class about twice a year. Sport is his passion and he coaches and attends matches. He is behind the cultural aspect of the curriculum one hundred per cent and encourages the “cultural lady to run with it”. Spiritual involvement is high on his agenda and he takes assemblies and prayers.

P3 described the principal as helping at events such as cross-country and galas. He coaches sport from Grades 1 to 3 and takes children to various inter-school and inter-district events. He went as part of a team to the head of the cultural department’s house for a planning meeting and this person will report back to him on what is taking place. He keeps up to date with latest trends in education

and “he would never go into his office and say what are you talking about. He knows the trends”.

P3 also stated that spiritual instruction is the strongest pillar of the school. There is a great deal of pastoral care of the staff and he will write them letters and share scriptures during a down time. Staff receive a note of encouragement from their colleagues with their salary advice slips. He conducts prayer meetings. The Moms who Care support group report to him. His faith is unyielding and unfaltering. There is a strong Christian ethos amongst the staff and all “team teach” and cover for each other without need for payback.

Principal's response

The principal responded by saying he loves teaching as it is a chance to get to know the characters of the children. He teaches Life Skills in each class from Grades 4 to 7 and coaches sport in Grades 1 to 3, especially boys' sport. He is not heavily involved in the cultural aspect of the school, but loves watching the children perform. He acknowledged that there were far more skilled people than him in this department. He was part of the planning team, but he saw his role in terms of providing resources for the various projects.

The principal did not perceive himself as having a “huge role” in the spiritual life of the school. He takes Assemblies and Friday prayers. The spiritual growth of the staff is left to the churches they attend. It is more important to “walk the talk and live the testimony”. All staff have to be Christian.

Question 10: List what you regard are some of the significant innovations in your school.

Parent /Educators' response

P1 identified a number of facilities that had been built. These included a swimming pool, sport fields, new classrooms, media centre, staffroom, computer room, library, audio-visual room, Zulu classroom and the purchase of two Smartboards. The Board was given credit for their progressive approach to the development of the school.

P2 also mentioned the swimming pool, tennis courts, new fields, extra classrooms and media centre. She also listed the new administration block, teachers' parking, electronic gates, security guards, fencing, roads and a turning circle. Credit was ascribed to the management of the school together with the principal. He spearheaded everything. He surrounds himself with knowledgeable people. The church also assists with capital development projects.

P3 focused more on academic innovations such as the Inclusion Policy, the introduction of THRASS (a phonic programme) and the special needs centre⁵ which offers extension classes in Maths and Language, remedial Maths and Language, Counseling Psychologist, audiblox, Speech and Language therapy, Occupational therapy and NILD therapy. P3 also mentioned the media centre. The principal was acknowledged as bringing in "every single innovation".

Principal's response

The principal regarded significant innovations as being the Outdoor Programme which is designed to build character and leadership in the children, the sport facilities such as the swimming pool, tennis courts and playing fields and the provision of air conditioners in all the classrooms.

There has been a great deal of development over the past years. Physical and academic resources have been provided to cater for the perceived needs of the holistic development of the pupils. The principal appears to be the driving force

⁵ Name has been changed to provide anonymity.

behind these innovations and he enjoys full support and assistance from the school management.

Question 11: Who has been responsible for these changes?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 gave credit to the Board for their progressive approach. They meet every month for meetings. P2 said that management spearheads change together with the principal. He has surrounded himself with knowledgeable people. The church had given the hall to the school and the principal spearheaded the media village. P3 said the media centre was the principal's brainchild and that he brought in every single innovation, for example, inclusion of special needs children and the special needs centre.

Principal's response

The principal also confirmed that the media centre had been his original idea.

Question 12: Who had the idea to develop the church hall into a media centre?

Parent /Educators' response

All three participants confirmed that the media centre had been the principal's idea. P3 added that all staff had been invited to have their say in terms of how the hall space should be developed.

Principal's response

The principal confirmed that the media centre had been his idea.

Question 13: What was the general feeling about the media centre and how were these feelings expressed?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 was delighted by the media centre and expressed her feelings verbally to other people.

P2 was very excited by the project although she felt there was initially some concern with regard to finances and the best direction for it to take> Parents were happy because it was a showcase for the school and they were very proud of it. The staff thought it was successful and they were fully supportive of the project. Feelings about the media centre had been expressed at the opening of the centre.

P3 initially thought the dream was too big, but acknowledged there was strong faith in the school and that the “Lord would provide”. The funds had come from fundraising and that the church assists. There has been phenomenal support from the parents. Feelings had been expressed at meetings and the verbal discussing of ideas.

Principal's response

The principal felt very positive, excited and there were no negatives to the project. Feelings had been expressed at the opening ceremony.

Question 14: Were there any problems with the implementation of the media centre?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 described structural problems like the leaky roof, the sloping floors which had to be leveled in sections and the need for air conditioning. Some people also wanted to keep it as a hall, but they came to see the big picture in the end. She commented that some people don't like to live through the building process.

P2 only described the roofing structure as a problem.

P3 said there had been a problem with the plumbing which had resulted in the media centre being flooded and new carpets having to be fitted, the roof had blown off in one section, a burglary had taken place, air conditioning had to be installed because air flow was a problem and the slant of the floor had provided a bit of difficulty in certain areas. There had also been some debate on whether to make the art room a place to visit or to have it as a specialist teaching room and another debate on whether it wouldn't be better to install the Smartboard in a classroom rather than the hall.

Principal's response

The principal said there had been a few challenges with the heat inside the rooms, the roof, electrical power, but nothing unforeseen.

The general problems with the media centre appeared to more structural than anything else. These were not perceived as major obstacles and creative, practical solutions had been found to deal with them. An example of this is when book shelves were made for the library, the base was constructed at an angle to counter the angle of the floor.

Question 15: Was there any involvement by the parents and community with the media centre?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 said parents had been involved with decorating and in fundraising such as Golf Days, Camp Outs and Country Fairs.

P2 replied that the principal had used businesses from the parent body such as the electrician and the carpet man. There was no fundraising from parents. She also commented on the fact that hall and school classrooms are used by the church community on Sundays.

P3 said that parents formed a committee to help. The builder and decorator were Christians and they had done a good job.

Principal's response

The principal said they didn't have to fund raise and there was little involvement by the parents. The money came from the Capital Development budget. It was a facility needed by the school. The work was subcontracted to people who would get the job done. There was a corporate image to maintain and the decorating had to comply with this image.

(There was some discrepancy in the findings regarding the fundraising for the media centre. A possible explanation for this could be that parents are involved with general fund raising for the school and this money or part thereof goes towards the Capital Development Fund which was used for funding the media centre.)

Question 16: To whom or what was the success of the media centre ascribed?
(The original question was success or failure, but from the preceding comments, it can be concluded that the media centre was a success.)

Parent /Educators' response

All four participants were rather surprised by this question and it appeared that the idea of someone taking credit for the media centre had not entered their mind. P1 said the success had been ascribed to the school and no one in particular. The church and the contractor had been thanked at the opening ceremony.

P2 said the principal was a very gracious leader and didn't claim the glory for himself.

P3 said the success could be ascribed to the principal, management and the Board of Governors. At the opening of the media centre, all the stakeholders were acknowledged. The staff all said it was the principal, but he said it was everyone with the same vision.

Principal's response

The principal said that the success was not ascribed to anybody. The emphasis was on celebrating the new facility.

Question 17: Were there any limitations imposed on the principal in the implementation of the media centre?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 said the Board was a hundred per cent behind the principal. He doesn't ask for unreasonable things and that together they discussed things from all angles and were there to support him.

P2 did not know of any limitations on the principal. His ideas are sound and make sense. He works within the school budget and "if you can do it, go for it".

P3 felt that initially the budget was a limitation, but parents gave donations, for example, the computers. This participant described the slope of the floor as a physical limitation.

Question 18: Would you like to make any further comments on any aspect of this interview?

Parent /Educators' response

P1 spoke from personal experience as a parent. She felt her children were loved and that her one child in particular had changed since transferring to this school. He was now "confident, happy and at peace".

P2 described the school as “lovely”. The ethos had been kept and that the school community had a love for children. “The Lord is in the whole structure”, the principal leads by example and that the focus was on the children. Staff must be willing to give extra time and to “follow” the principal and to be available.

P3 also commented on extra hours required by the staff, particularly for sport. The staff don’t get paid for it, but they do it for the principal. They respect him, but he doesn’t demand it. His main aim was to have a happy school and a happy staff. He is an “amazing” principal and his personal contact for each member of staff through letters or phone calls to them and their families was remarkable. He is realistic in his expectations and doesn’t “buy into paper pushing”. The principal likes to have a balance of experience in the different grades. He only wants players on his team that one hundred and ten per cent committed.

P3 also said the principal likes to have a ‘balance of experience’ in the different grades.

Principal’s response

The principal confirmed that no member of staff is exempt from extra-mural sport.

God had multiplied the school and that it was their Life’s purpose. “God put us here”. Children are given a good foundation and are prepared for the real world.

Some remarks were also made concerning the vision for the future of the school:

Parent /Educators’ response

P1 – a new covered courtyard is to be built

- old offices would be converted into classrooms for 2008
- new sports hall to be built

- we want it to be a really beautiful school
- the principal knows what he wants and where to go
- the plan was to buff the primary school
- they would love a high school

P3 – the principal always gets us to buy into his vision

- at Monday Management meetings, they dream about the vision for the future

Principal's response

P4 - the vision is not impeded by finance

- there is a five year and a ten year development plan in place
- the next project is new classrooms, the courtyard and new sports hall
- a high school ?
- a hall over the pool would be nice

4.2.2 Findings and discussion: Semi-structured interviews

The following key findings emerged from the responses of the participants during the course of their interviews:

a) Strong leadership

There appears to be a great deal of evidence for strong leadership by the principal. He is described as “positive” (P1), “stern” (P1), “strong” (P2), “gracious” (P2), “a man of integrity” (P3), “leads by example” (P2, P3), “empowers” (P3), and “servant leader” (P4).

P1, P2, and P3 were unanimous in their recognition of the strong leadership role of the principal. P4 recognises that he is a leader within the school, but his emphasis is on “how you can serve your fellow man and community” and “growing himself as a leader”.

Mention was made of the firm, decisive leadership of the principal. Whilst he is prepared to help where necessary, deadlines do have to be met. This is also evident in the strict financial management of the school budget.

b) Role model and inspirational leader

All three participants (P1,P2 and P3) viewed the principal's knowing of each child's name as evidence of his commitment and concern for the pupils in his school. There are just over 500 children in the school, so this must take considerable effort on his part.

The principal's involvement with the children in terms of teaching and coaching are practical examples of his 'walking the talk' in terms of commitment to the school.

c) Distributed leadership

There is strong evidence for distributed leadership within the school. All participants mentioned the supportive of the Board of Governors and the Church. P2, felt the management team of the school played an important role in the school's development. P3 commented on the commitment of the staff and the fact that the principal surrounds himself with knowledgeable people. P4 mentioned the significant role of the bursar in managing finance and the three people who "have influence" around him: a Board member, friend and Church minister.

The success of the media centre not ascribed to one person, but seen as a collective achievement. As part of the leadership style of the principal, teams are acknowledged and he sees himself as part of the team.

The data does not say that the media centre would have failed without the principal's involvement. However his agency plays a significant role within the

distributed leadership of the school as confirmed by P1, P2 and P3. There was some resistance to the media centre as P3 said she initially felt that the “dream was too big” and that some parents don’t like to live through the building process. This resistance was not regarded as significant as it was overcome by through the persuasive agency of the principal. P1 mentioned his strong vision and that he knows where he wants to go. This was presented positively and not in terms of dictatorship. As a change agent, the principal’s passionate commitment to see the media centre innovation through to its completion is significant in terms of its success.

d) Management by the principal

As a school manager, the principal was perceived to be “organized” (P1), has knowledge of problems and success within his school (P1, P2, P3 and P4) he is involved with every facet of school life and keeps in touch with everything (P1, P2, P3 and P4).

The principal’s full commitment to the school was a view shared by 100% of participants.

e) Supportive and approachable leadership

There is a strong bond between the staff and the principal and he is very supportive of them (P1). He has an open door policy and exhibits care for the staff beyond the bounds of what is normally required of his position in that he is willing to help them through personal difficulties (P1, P2, P3, P4). There is a strong sense of teamwork and the principal is seen to be a part of the team (P4). Communities of practice appear to be firmly in place in this caring environment.

All participants agreed that the principal was supportive and approachable. He is always willing to discuss professional and personal issues with his staff and will provide guidance and assistance where necessary. This is underpinned by his

belief that “families come first because if that is not in order, nothing else will work” (P2).

f) Financial management and structures

Procedures and order are established and this is clearly evident in the financial management of the school. There is “strict control” (P2) of the budget, but finances are not regarded as a limitation on the “dreams” of the school (P1, P2, P3 and P4). If something is really needed or wanted, a way will be found to ensure that it is acquired.

All four participants agreed that the principal was a key figure in terms of budget control, but he is reasonable when it comes to requests for money to purchase things that will enhance effective teaching and learning. He consults with the bursar and Board of Governors and ensures that needs are met within the school budget.

g) A culture of democracy, participation and collegiality

The principal is described as a democratic leader who shares responsibility with others (P2). He gives “responsibility together with the authority” to accomplish tasks (P1). He involves others, openly discusses issues with the staff and invites their input in strategic development and planning (P1, P2, P3 and P4).

There was unanimous agreement that the principal involves the stakeholders in decision-making at every opportunity. The principal has a vision but wants the staff to regard it as “ours as apposed to mine... I like to work with happy and motivated people, not from the top down, but motivated because they own it and love to do it” (P4).

h) Commonness of purpose, values and vision

The principal is passionate about his school and this appears to be a significant factor in the motivation of the staff. They are united in a common purpose as all

staff members are Christian (p1, P2, P3 and P4). This is not meant to be a 'religious' school, but one where the "testimony" is lived out in the daily lives of the staff and children (P3). Serving one's fellow man is a core value of Christianity and the principal subscribes to "servant leadership" (P4). This is perceived as "greatness" (P3, P4).

Christianity is recognized by all the participants as the foundation upon which the school is built. P3 and P4 stated that all teachers have to be Christian and must be actively involved in their respective churches. Whilst children do not have to be Christians to attend the school, no allowances are made for other religions. Parents enroll their children with the understanding that this is not a multi-faith school (P2).

i) Agency of the principal

The principal is described as an "encourager", skills developer, someone who empowers staff and identifies leaders. This positive approach 'invites' staff to be part of the communities of practice within the school because they know he will be there to support, appreciate and guide them. Staff development is tremendously important in a school because it ensures that teachers develop the necessary skills to achieve competence.

The provision of resources in the school is another indication of how the principal uses his agency. By providing an environment where teachers can have the resources they need for teaching, sends out the message that they are valued for their professionalism. It would follow that this would create an environment of mutual dependency and support for future developments.

4.2.3 Document analysis

Copies of documents were given to me by the principal. Only extracts of minutes pertaining to the media centre were given.

Document 1: Marketing minutes – March 2005

Inviting stakeholder participation

This meeting dealt with creating an increased awareness of the outdoor programme and the school brand. This was to be done through writing articles for various magazines and building relationships within the community.

Vision for the school

The expansion of the school is to be maintained by driving enrolments in the Pre-school.

Fundraising

The media centre would be the beneficiary of fund raising as would the growing sport facilities.

Planning and monitoring

It was interesting to note that quarterly controls are in place to monitor the progress that is being made. Objectives must be achieved and strategies will be in place to ensure that this happens. The sport facilities and the new media centre will help to perceive the school as “greater value for money”.

No mention of principal

There is no mention of the principal and the role he is expected to play.

Document 2: Board of Governors Minutes – April 2005

Fundraising and income generation

The extract from these minutes concerned Capital Development Projects. The governor in charge of this portfolio aimed to “increase our asset base and put into

motion an income generating project to fund future development and maintenance thereof.”

Prioritisation of the media centre

The principal commented that he wanted the media centre to be “first priority.”

Document 3: Board of Governors Minutes – July 2005

Media centre planning

The media centre planning was discussed under the heading Capital Development Projects. No details of what was discussed were mentioned in the extract given to me.

Document 4: Liason Moms Minutes – Third tem 2005

Participation of the stakeholders

The principal showed the moms the proposed layout for the media centre. “It was greeted with much enthusiasm.”

Recognition of principal’s leadership

A further comment was made that there is “generally great enthusiasm and dedication amongst these moms and they are all happy with the overall appearance of the school and its new facilities as well as the running of the school.” The principal and his staff were thanked.

Document 5: Board of Governors Minutes – May 2006

Completion of media centre

The media centre has been completed and it has “transformed” the school. Other comments are “added value and use”, “magnificent library”, and a “wonderful asset.”

Credit given to church

Credit was given to the church for their generosity in giving the original building to the school.

Planning and monitoring

Further comment was made concerning the air conditioning. Four of the rooms had air conditioning and the rest of the rooms would be fitted when funding was received. It was reported that the air conditioning “has made a significant difference already and during this cold weather it has been well utilized in warming the classrooms”.

Document 6: Extract from a brochure – Undated

Planning and vision

This document consists of a page with three paragraphs on it and a map of the school. The first paragraph gives a brief history of the school and its purpose as a Christian school “where children are given the freedom to grow, nurture character development and discover their gifting.”

Recognition of completed innovation and its success

The second paragraph deals with a description of its location and facilities. The media centre and all its various rooms are mentioned.

Planning and vision

The third paragraph talks about the number of children in the classes and the proposed expansion of the school.

Concern for comfort of staff and children

The map shows an ordered, well-planned estate. There are specific areas in the campus that have been designated to the various departments, for example, the media centre as the cultural sector, the primary school classrooms are together, the administration offices are in the same section and the Pre-school is in its own corner, sufficiently apart from the rest of the school, presumably to prevent the inevitable noise of young children from being a distraction to the rest of the school.

Document 7: Newspaper article – July 2006

Recognition of innovation success

This article describes the opening of the media centre to “loud applause from parents, learners and teachers...”

Credit given to the church

Mention is made of the church donation of the building and how it was revamped into the media centre. Details of the various rooms are given and special mention made of the “fun funky” library.

Shared collegiality

The rooms were all opened by the children who cut ribbons on the various doors.

No mention of principal

No mention of the principal was made.

Document 8: Plans of the media centre

Planning and vision

The media centre consists of eight rooms surrounding the hall and stage area. The biggest room is the media centre and there are two computer rooms, art room, audio-visual room, Zulu room, staff room and Music room.

A second plan shows the façade of the interior design of three sides. The characteristic cottage pane windows and French doors continue the corporate image of the school.

4.2.4 Findings and discussion: Document analysis

The following key findings emerged from the document analysis:

a) Acknowledgement of the role of the principal

The principal was mentioned in the minutes as described in Documents 2 and 4. However, he was noticeably absent from Document 7. This newspaper article did not mention him once in connection with the opening of the media centre. This corroborates with the interviews where the participants said that nobody was given credit for the media centre.

b) Collaboration and participation

The principal is seen to be part of the school team. In Document 4, the moms thanked the principal **and** staff (emphasis added), in Document 5, the Board refers to the school as **our** school (emphasis added) and in Document 7, the children opened the various rooms in the media centre and not the principal.

The enthusiasm for the media village as mentioned in Document 4 is significant because the principal was clearly using the opportunity to use his agency to get the stakeholders to be involved with his vision.

c) Vision and planning

The media centre project was approached with professionalism. An architect drew up the plans which give evidence of professional input. The Board of Governors are supportive of the plan as seen in Document 5.

There is an impression gained that the school is not unfolding a history, but are creating history by design. There is a sense of purpose in what is discussed for the future, but projects are prioritized and completed, before the next one is begun. Evidence of this is found in Document 2, when the principal says that the media centre is “first priority” and in Document 5, when mention is made of air conditioners being added to the rest of the rooms “when the rest of the money is paid in.”

d) Agency of the principal

With the exception of Document 4, where the principal was thanked for the overall appearance of the school and its new facilities, there was no direct mention made in the various documents of the principal’s leadership and involvement in the school. However, there is evidence of his agency in the progress of the media centre. In Documents 1 and 2 the media centre was mentioned as a priority, and significantly, in Document 3, three months later, the media centre was being planned. The stakeholders had obviously bought into his vision as described in the interviews.

The enthusiasm for the media village as mentioned in Document 4 is significant because the principal was clearly using the opportunity and exercising his agency to get the stakeholders to be involved with his vision.

The media centre was completed approximately a year after its initial planning. The mention of the media centre in Document 6 is yet further evidence of how the principal’s exercising of his agency to accomplish his vision.

e) Concern for the comfort and safety of the staff and children

The introduction of airconditioners (Document 5) and the allocation of staff parking and layout of the school (Document 6) seems to indicate the principal’s concern for the general safety and comfort of the staff.

4.2.5 *Photograph analysis*

The purpose of using photographs was to establish the value that the principal placed on innovations within the school and to provide a visual record of what he regards as important developments that have taken place during his headship at the school and to see whether this corroborated with the views of the other stakeholders. While the focus of this study is the media centre, other innovations helped to establish the extent of his leadership, vision and involvement in the school.

Photograph 1: View of the hall

The hall was rather dark when this photograph was taken as there were few lights switched on. There were a number of metal trestle tables set up for a forthcoming function. There is a view of the stage and on the back wall of the stage is a Smartboard. There is a light brown carpet on the floor and the walls are painted cream. On the far right a wooden door is visible, which is the entry point into the media centre.

The principal commented on the darkness inside the hall and hoped the photograph would come out.

Photograph 2: A view of the media centre from inside the hall

This picture is brighter than the first one. There are a number of cottage pane windows and a French door through which a tapestry of colour was visible. Books, computers and a display can be seen through the windows, although they look quite small from the vantage point. There are three empty display boards with dark wooden frames around them. There is brown wooden skirting around the edge of the hall. The walls and carpets are clean. A few ceiling fans are visible and the fluorescent lighting is neatly concealed behind rectangular light

fittings which form part of the ceilings. A pole appears to be part of a roofing support structure.

Photograph 3: Bursar's office

The bursar's office is a cream building with a sloping roof. There are French doors and cottage pane windows, the school badge and the name of the school on the outside façade. There are two potted plants, one on each side of the door. To the right of the office, is a parking lot. An airconditioner and telephone cables are visible. This office is on the end of a row of buildings. The area in front of the office has a concrete surface. It is cleanly swept and there is no litter to be seen.

This office is of significant importance to the principal as this is from where the school started. The office had originally been a storeroom with roller doors on the front.

Photograph 4: The two rows of classrooms

Although the space between the two rows of classrooms was deep in shadow, the tarred area, awnings, doors, windows, airconditioners, potted plants and cream walls are visible in the photograph. The green awnings are supported by white poles and the characteristic cottage pane windows allow light and ventilation into the classrooms.

Photograph 5: Inside view of a Grade three classroom

The ceilings are quite high and the fluorescent light are suspended by chains, to allow more light where the children are working. The walls are painted blue and there are a number of charts and pieces of artwork on the walls. A carpet is in one corner of the classroom where the teacher would do 'mat work' with the

children. Desks, chairs, a book case and display tables make up the furniture in the room. The classroom was bright, neat, clean and appears to be conducive to effective teaching and learning.

The principal chose this classroom at random and appeared comfortable about walking in and photographing it without the teacher's consent. He asked if I would like to be in the photograph, but I declined as I felt it wasn't necessary.

Photograph 6: The outdoor education centre

This large wooden cabin is nestled amongst tall trees and what appears to be lush indigenous gardens. A trailer is housed in a carport attached to the cabin. The education centre is separate from the main part of the school. The principal explained that the outdoor programme caters for children from grades 0 – 7 and individuals are put through a programme that develops leadership skills. Sleep outs, mountain challenges and sea rafting are some of the activities with which the children are engaged.

Photograph 7: A second view of the education centre

This was a photograph of the same wooden cabin, but from a different angle. A paddle-ski is resting against the balustrade and a building is seen on the right of the cabin. The grass is neat, green and appeared to be recently cut.

The principal decided to take a second photograph because it would show a bit more detail than the first.

Photograph 8: The tennis courts and sports fields

There are two full-size tennis courts with painted lines visible. Looking through the fencing surrounding the tennis courts, extensive level playing fields can be

seen. There are a number of goal posts on the field, a score board and a stand for supporters to use as seating. A palisade fence secures the property. In the far left hand corner is a partial view of the church auditorium which is also used by the school for certain functions.

In the far distance, some children were having a sport lesson, but are not identifiable because of the distance from the camera.

Photograph 9: The school swimming pool

An eight-lane swimming pool caters for the swimming needs of the children. It is fully fenced and a double gate provides an entry point. A row of flags has been suspended across the pool. There is tiered concrete seating on two sides of the pool. A small building with a flat roof is in one corner of the enclosure. There is concrete paving surrounding the pool. In the background the church auditorium is partially visible. Trees obscure the full view of this large building.

It took one year to construct the fields, tennis courts and playing fields. The principal said that the construction of the fields had made a huge difference to the sport in the school. The sport facilities no longer necessitated the children having to use community facilities as everything was now on site.

Photograph 10: The Junior Primary jungle gym

This playing area has a variety of climbing apparatus, tyres and rope ladders for the children to play on. It is constructed from wooden poles which have been left in their natural colour. The whole jungle gym is positioned in Umgeni sand and is bordered with grass. This is the area where the Grade 1 and 2 children spend their break times.

A few children were playing on this jungle gym when the photograph was taken. However, none of them could be identified because of their distance from the camera. The children greeted the principal and he responded using their names.

Photograph 11: The indoor sports hall

This hall was previously used for school assemblies. It has a carpeted floor with yellow lines painted on the surface for indoor games. The walls are yellow and there is a high roof with no ceiling boards. At the time, a team of boys and their coach were playing indoor soccer. All boys and the member of staff were in sports kit. None of the children could be identified because of the angle of the photograph. The teacher and the children closest to the principal greeted him and he responded using their names.

This hall is to be converted into three classrooms with a new sports hall to be constructed above them in the near future.

Whilst in this room, the estate manager approached the principal asking him where something needed to be stored.

Photograph 12: The Pre-school

The pre-school is the main entry point into the school. It has its own section of the campus and has an entrance flanked by buildings on either side. It is fenced with wooden picket-type fencing and also has the characteristic green roof, cream walls and cottage-pane windows. A turning circle and clearly marked roads and parking facilitate traffic flow. A number of large trees also form a boundary to this section of the school.

At the end of this session, the principal thanked me for coming to the school and then went to his next appointment.

4.2.6 Findings and discussion: Photograph analysis

The following key findings emerged from the photograph analysis:

a) Corporate image and creation of a conducive learning and teaching environment

Although this school has renovated very old buildings which were on the property when it was purchased, and built on new sections, the corporate image of the school is consistent throughout. All the roofs are green, the exterior walls are cream, and the cottage windows and French doors create cohesion in terms of architectural style. The school is visually appealing in that there are many little nooks and crannies which add to the character of the campus and almost impels the visitor to explore the estate.

b) Common values

Trees are of significance to the school and are used as an analogy in their life skill programme. There are old and new trees, indigenous plants and beautiful shrubs in the gardens and in decorative pots around the school.

c) School ethos

On the day that the photographs were taken, the school was immaculate. The grass had been cut, no litter was seen, the verandahs and carpets were clean, no dirty marks on the walls were observed and even the teacher's classroom was in order. This classroom was chosen at random and after visiting another classroom on a different day, quite by chance, the impression I had was this was the expected norm from all the staff. I visited the school on a number of occasions, and always found it in the same condition.

d) Concern for well-being and comfort of learners and staff

The campus also has a purpose in its design. There are distinct locales within the grounds with the classrooms together, the media centre as the cultural centre of the school, the administration block, the Pre-school and the demarcated playing fields which were pointed out to me by the principal on our transect walk. The roads within the school are conducive to traffic flow and there is ample parking.

The children can be dropped off in clearly demarcated zones. There are fences around the Pre-school and the swimming pool. The school borders a busy road and the palisade fencing around the perimeter keeps the children confined to the school property. Access to the property is monitored by security guards.

e) Personal commitment

There is understandably a very close bond between the principal and the school. When we stopped outside the bursar's office which is "where the school began", I could not help but notice the softening of the principal's features as for a brief moment he remembered what for him must be a special time in the history of the school. So much has happened within the school in the past decade or so, but this building clearly holds many memories for him which perhaps an outsider could not fully appreciate.

f) Identification of priorities, vision and planning

The development of the school could be described as 'sensible'. The principal looks at what they have and builds on what is needed. The indoor sports hall has a solid structure and the renovation of this into three classrooms and an upstairs indoor sports hall is very clever. This will be both cost effective and will satisfy the needs of the pupils.

The enthusiasm of the principal was evident in his proposed plans to convert the bursar's office into a new grade three classroom, the creation of an undercover plaza and a roofing structure over the swimming pool. There is no impulsive

rush to get these facilities. They are part of a five year plan and will be carefully completed in due course.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the data analysis was presented. The semi-structured interviews, documents and photographs were analysed and the findings emanating from them discussed. The responses of all four participants were analysed under each question of the semi-structured interviews analysis. These were categorized in two sections as the response of the principal represented a different perspective to that of the other participants.

In the next and final chapter, a summary of the key findings will be presented and discussed in relation to the literature review and critical questions of this research study.

Chapter 5

Findings and conclusion

5.1 *Introduction*

In the previous chapter, an analysis of the semi-structured interviews, documents and photographs was undertaken and the findings emanating from them discussed. In this chapter, a discussion of the key findings will be presented and discussed in relation to the literature review and critical questions of this research study. A conclusion will follow the summary of findings.

5.2 *Summary of findings*

The data analysis revealed that the principal of this particular school is involved in every facet of school life and subtly exercises his agency in this fashion. He is a sports coach, teacher, attends meetings of all the different sub-committees such as the Moms who care, Marketing, and Liason Moms. He is a member of the Board of Governors, is involved with ISASA and is an elder in the church which has a strong affiliation with the school. Aside from this he is aware of the latest trends in the academic curriculum, mentors the staff, conducts staff development workshops, keeps abreast of the developments on the estate, plays a supportive role in the cultural life of the school and yet still finds time to learn each child's name and entertain the Pre-school with ventriloquism.

The role of principal is a demanding one and, as a school grows, it inevitably becomes more complex to manage. This principal's determination to keep in touch with classroom and sporting dynamics has earned him the respect of the staff and parents and the affection and devotion of the children. This was mentioned by one of the participants (P1), "His very nature and involvement with the children has earned him their respect...he is all things to all ages, like he is quite happy for the little ones to cling to his legs. He doesn't even bat an eyelid".

The principal can be described by what Fullan (2007, p.7) refers to as an “Energetic-enthusiastic-hopeful leader”. “Energetic-enthusiastic-hopeful leaders “cause” greater moral purpose in themselves, bury themselves in change, naturally build relationships and knowledge, and seek coherence to consolidate moral purpose...Effective leaders make people feel that even the most difficult problems can be tackled productively. They are always hopeful – conveying a sense of optimism and an attitude of never giving up in the pursuit of highly valued goals. Their enthusiasm and confidence (not certainty) are, in a word infectious...” (Fullan, 2001, p.7)

Motivation and attitude has a direct bearing on productivity. When a leader is passionate and involved in all aspects of school life, this must have a positive effect on his or her followers. There is a convenient tendency for heads of school to retreat behind their desks instead of braving the elements and the children on the sportsfield or in the classroom. From the analysis of my data, it would appear that sharing the ‘hardships’ as well as the good times creates empathy and co-operation with the staff. P3 mentioned in her interview that “he would have made it his business to know that I did [extra sport duty]...you do know it is appreciated”.

The Hawthorne Effect is a classic example of how productivity increased because people were made to feel special. From this study Mayo and his colleagues put forward two important propositions: “First... to see the work process as a collective, co-operative activity as averse to an individual, isolated one...second...humans have a deep need for recognition, security and belonging” (Burnes, 2000, pp. 61-62).

My research indicates that the staff are cared for on a personal level. P3 said that “his extra touch...is the personal letter, a letter to your parents, a phone call to your pastor or minister, phoning your husband to say...I just want you to know

I so appreciate what [your wife] does...down to the lowest key player in the school, the smallest, he does the same". Barnard also believed "co-operation could not be achieved solely by monetary incentives" (Burnes, 2000, p.63). It is human nature to constantly strive towards improving one's financial position. For many people, the more money they have, the more they spend. However, money alone does not necessarily provide satisfaction. They want to be recognized as individuals and appreciated for what they do. During one of my interviews, it was quite interesting to hear the participant recite, almost verbatim, a thank you letter she had recently received from the principal. It clearly meant a great deal to her. Another participant mentioned that each month a letter of encouragement from a member of staff was included with salary advice slips. This letter was something eagerly awaited, "you open that salary slip rather to see ... who wrote to me this month..." This is very much in keeping with the Human Relations approach to organizational management as discussed in my Literature Review.

Children are also motivated and encouraged in many different ways. Every Friday, the children who have had a birthday during the week are taken in the school bus to a local ice-cream store for an ice-cream to celebrate their special occasion. P1 mentioned that in assemblies "he gives accolades to anyone who has done anything that is vaguely important. If someone has won an art competition, they come up and shake his hand and he tells them how wonderful it is that someone has won an art competition...the kids love it". P3 told me that children are awarded merits for various things and after eight merits they have the opportunity to have coffee with the principal. These are simple, but practical ways for the principal to show his concern and to positively affirm achievement and success.

Commonness of purpose emerged as a significant factor in the school. All members of the staff have to be Christians and must be actively involved in their respective churches. They are all committed to "educating for eternity". The staff

view their responsibilities within a broader context than just educating children. McGregor's Theory Y perceives that "The average person will accept and even seek responsibility if they are committed to the objectives being pursued" (Burns, 2000, p.65).

Collegiality is an important aspect of the principal's management style. He involves the children, parents and staff. P1 mentioned that the principal encourages the children to "supply their own needs in some way, e.g. every class has a little fundraising thing every term...I think it is wonderful because it involves the children in how they can improve their classroom and buy the things they need". The Grade Seven children are given the opportunity to share something from the Bible in Assembly. The principal does not want to run the whole show. Children were also used to open the new media centre. The principal would have been justified in doing this himself, but wanted the focus to be on the children.

Parents are also welcomed into the school. P1 stated that "he likes to get parents involved in the school... you are welcome to be involved in the school whether it be sport, drama or whatever". If a parent has an area of expertise or would like to be part of the fundraising, pastoral care or be involved with the décor projects, the door is wide open.

Staff are given the opportunity to express their ideas and to discuss all the issues in the school. Regular meetings are held with specialist teachers, remedial staff and the pre-school. Regular mention was made of the number of opportunities staff were given to be part of the design of the media centre. P3 confirms his collegiality by saying that "when it comes down to a decision, he has got a nack...he will make the staff feel that they did have a say".

The principal's agency is portrayed in his positive approach towards the stakeholders. As someone who is willing to identify leaders, develop skills and

encourages the staff, he motivates people to become part of the communities of practice. He wants them to develop confidence and the necessary skills to achieve competence. Resources are provided which assures teachers that their expertise and commitment is valued.

5.3 Conclusion

The intention of my study was to explore the agency of the principal in the management of a media centre innovation. The methodology that was used was an interpretive case study. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews, document analysis and photo elicitation technique. Four participants were selected for the semi-structured interviews and represented the stakeholders within the school, namely parent who was also a member of the Board of Governors, teacher, head of department and the principal. Data analysis was done by means of open coding and key findings were summarized under different headings.

Leadership can be described as a multi-faceted concept which needs to be placed *in situ* to be understood. The principal is the foremost leader in a school and is ultimately responsible for all decisions made within this dynamic organization. In order to be in the forefront of change, a school demands a leader of integrity and vision, a person of strong character with a willingness to use his agency in the management of change.

Based on my research findings, the principal involved with my study appears to be such a leader. He can be attributed with innovations such as the development of a multi-media centre, extensive sport facilities, new classrooms, security systems, air conditioning installation, leadership programmes, special needs centre, curriculum development, staff developments and technology implementation. Whilst the principal has been ably supported by the stakeholders and particularly the Board of Governors, the innovations have been

attributed to his leadership and agency which is exercised subtly in the form of strong, motivational and participatory leadership and the conscious development of a school culture of commitment and service.

The selected innovation for the purpose of this study was the media centre. He was fully involved, from the initial vision for the space assigned to the school for the project, to its successful completion. There were many planning meetings with the Board of Governors, the church, marketing committee, mothers' committee, marketing committee, staff, architects and builders. He listened to all suggestions and co-ordinated his findings to develop what has been regarded as a fully functional place of learning. He delegated aspects such as décor and organization of the various rooms to different people, but was on site to monitor the building of the media centre.

The sole limitation that appeared to have been placed on the principal's agency was that of working within the set budget. The cost of building the media centre was regarded as reasonable and the media centre would be an asset to effect learning and teaching.

The principal has not been accorded sole credit for the success of the media centre. Distributed leadership within the school ensured that the collective involvement of the stakeholders contributed towards its success. However, his agency appears to have had a significant impact on the successful management of the media centre.

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Appendix: 1 Semi-structured interview schedule

1. What role have you seen the principal playing in your school in terms of
 - 1.1 School Leadership (Giving the school direction)
 - 1.2 School Management (Managing the general day to day running of the school)
 - 1.3 Human Resource Management (Managing staff concerns)
 - 1.4 Financial Administration (Control of the school finances)
 - 1.5 Any other significant roles
2. From your observation of the role played by the principal, what appears to be his foremost responsibilities?
3. Do you think your principal provides leadership in your school?
 - 3.1 Explain your answer.
 - 3.2 Authoritarian, democratic and sharing of responsibility are some of the words used to describe different styles of leadership. How would you describe your principal's leadership style?
4. What is the principal's involvement in the school curricula? Comment on his involvement in:
 - 4.1 The academic programme
 - 4.2 Sport
 - 4.3 Cultural activities
 - 4.4 Spiritual development
5. List some of the significant innovations in your school
 - 5.1 Who or what has been responsible for these changes?
 - 5.2 Did the principal play a role in bringing about these innovations?
 - 5.3 What role did the principal play? Explain the extent of his involvement.

6. In the case of the media centre innovation, who came up with the idea?
 - 6.1 Was the principal involved in the choice of the media centre?
 - 6.2 How did you feel about the introduction of the media centre?
 - 6.3 What role did the people in the school and community play in the media centre?
7. What was your perception of the level of support for the media centre and the principal's involvement – if any?
 - 7.1 Were there any problems with the implementation of the media centre?
 - 7.2 How did people feel about it? Were they happy about the media centre being introduced?
 - 7.3 How did you express your feelings about the media centre?
8. Was the principal involved in the media centre?
 - 8.1 In what way was the principal involved in the process of implementation?
 - 8.2 Describe the principal's involvement in the media centre?
9. Upon completion of the media centre, did the principal comment on its success or failure?
 - 9.1 To whom or what was the success or failure of this project ascribed?
 - 9.2 To whom did the principal ascribe its success or, if applicable its failure?
 - 9.3 Do you think the principal was justified in making this comment?
10. Were there any limitations placed on the principal by any of the people in the school or community? If so, how were these overcome?

Appendix 2: Letter of consent to participate in study

P.O. Box 773
HILLCREST
3650

Date

Dear _____

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to inform you about the purpose of my research and particularly, to outline your involvement in my data collection.

Written consent of all participants is a prerequisite to research and is a requirement of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Please read the following information, initial each page and sign the declaration at the end.

Thank you for your interest, and I look forward to engaging with you on what I hope will be a mutually enriching experience.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gayle Harris

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

1. Details of Researcher

Name: Gayle Harris
Student No: 934303113
University: University of Kwazulu Natal
Faculty: Education

Qualifications: B Prim Ed, Hons B Ed with specialization in Educational Management
Present Studies: M Ed in Education with specialization in Leadership, Management and Policy (Final year)
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2. Details of Supervisor

Name: Ms Maggie Govender
University: University of Kwazulu Natal
Contact No: 031 2603 461
govenderm44@ukzn.ac.za

3. Research Title

The agency of an independent primary school principal in the management of a selected innovation. (Agency in this context means the personal power, authority and influence of the principal.)

4. Research Aim

One of the current trends in education is the move towards self-management in schools. Schools are becoming empowered to make their own decisions with regard to how they wish their school to be managed.

As the foremost leader of the school, the principal has a unique role to play in the management of change. His particular involvement is perceived as being critical to the attitude and willingness of the staff to participate in the process. The major aim of my research is to investigate the impact of the principal's agency on a particular innovation.

5. Choice of participants

Your school was selected for my research because it has a reputation in both educational and community circles, for being a dynamic and progressive institution. A sample of some of the stakeholder's opinions is necessary to gain a multi-faceted perspective on how the principal managed a change innovation.

The principal agreed to be involved and the other three participants are chosen at random because of the various positions they hold, namely, member of the Board of Governors who is also a parent, a Head of Department and an Educator.

6. Participation Requirements

Principal

The principal will be asked to take digital photographs of what he perceives to be innovations for which he has been responsible. This will provide a visual record of his achievements as leader of the school.

The principal will be asked to grant access to various documents relating to the innovation, to the researcher. Documents may include the school magazine, newspaper articles, newsletters to parents and minutes of meetings. The reason for this is to examine a written record of the innovation to be studied.

The principal will also be involved in two semi-structured interviews lasting approximately forty-five minutes. A follow up interview may be requested to clarify certain points at the end of the data collection process.

Member of the Board of Governors, Head of Department and Educator

All three participants will be required to participate in one semi-structured interview lasting approximately forty-five minutes. These will take place independently of each other. A follow up interview may be requested if certain aspects of the interviews need clarification.

All interviews will be recorded on cassette tape for later transcription and analysis. These recordings will be kept in a locked container in the researcher's home until completion of the dissertation. Thereafter, the tapes will be kept in a locked container by the University of Kwazulu Natal for a time required by the University, usually about five years. They will then be destroyed. Any copies of documents provided will be treated in the same way. Photographs will not be included in the thesis publication.

The interview schedule will be provided prior to the interviews and participants are free to exclude any questions that they may not wish to answer. As these are semi-structured interviews, the dialogue may progress during the interview and the proposed questions are thus guidelines of what will be discussed.

The proposed month for these interviews will be April 2007, at a pre-arranged time that is convenient for the participants.

7. Potential Benefits

The potential benefit for the participants is the opportunity to reflect on how an innovation has been managed in their school.

8. Payment for participation

No financial remuneration is permitted for participating in this research project.

9. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The name of the school, participants and the exact location of the school will not be mentioned in my thesis, oral presentations or publications. It is requested that participants do not collaborate before their interviews. The disclosure of their identity to each other is at the discretion of the principal and the participants.

10. Voluntary Participation

All participation is voluntary and subjects are free to withdraw at any time. Any decision not to participate will not result in any form of disadvantage.

Interviews will be transcribed and given to participants for their perusal. They are free to exclude any statement that they deem to be inappropriate for use in my thesis.

DECLARATION OF PARTICIPATION

I _____
(full name of participant)

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signed _____ Date _____

CONSENT FORM ATTACHED TO TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS P1, P2, P3

I hereby give permission for Gayle Harris to use the information in this transcription for the purpose of writing a dissertation for her Med degree at the Univerity of KZN. I believe this to be an accurate rendition of our interview held on the (DATE) I understand that any references which have been deleted by me will not be used for research purposes.

Signature of participant _____

Date _____

CONSENT FORM ATTACHED TO TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW P4

I hereby give permission for Gayle Harris to use the information in this transcription for the purpose of writing a dissertation for her Med degree at the Univerity of KZN. I believe this to be an accurate rendition of our interview held on the 30 May 2007. I understand that any references which have been deleted by me will not be used for research purposes.

I also give permission for Gayle Harris to refer to both the photographs taken by myself on the 23 May 2007 and copies of the school documents given to her by myself. Any restrictions are listed below:

Signature of participant_____

Date _____

Appendix 3: Photographs of school



Photograph 1: View of the hall



Photograph 2: A view of the media centre from inside the hall



Photograph 3: Bursar's office



Photograph 4: The two rows of classrooms



Photograph 5: Inside view of a grade three classroom



Photograph 6: The outdoor education centre



Photograph 7: A second view of the education centre



Photograph 8: The tennis courts and sports fields



Photograph 9: The school swimming pool



Photograph 10: The Junior Primary jungle gym



Photograph 11: The indoor sports hall



Photograph 12: The Pre-school